

THE COMMONWEAL

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BACKLOG MUSINGS

IN ANNOUNCING that he would sign the unemployment relief bill in spite of several minor provisions which he found objectionable, President Hoover summed up his view of its "three major features" in words which may provide the decisive testing of his own qualifications as a candidate for continuance in office in the minds of millions of voters. For by the time when these voters go to the polling booths next November, what he has had to say about the effects of the relief bill should either be justified, or proven to be wrong. For the President has committed himself definitely, and expressed his judgments with unusual clarity and force, as follows:

"First: Through provision of \$300,000,000 of temporary loans by the Reconstruction Corporation to such states as are absolutely unable to finance the relief of distress, we have a solid backlog of assurance that there need be no hunger and cold in the United States. These loans are to be based upon absolute need and evidence of financial exhaustion. I do not expect any state to resort to it except as a last extremity.

"Second: Through the provision for \$1,500,000,000 of loans by the Reconstruction Corporation for reproductive construction work of public character on terms

which will be repaid, we should ultimately be able to find employment for hundreds of thousands of people without drain on the taxpayer.

"Third: Through the broadening of the powers of the corporation in the character of loans it can make to assist agriculture, we should materially improve the position of the farmer."

These are tremendous assurances. If proven to be true, there will soon be no starving and shelterless men, women and children in all the land; hundreds of thousands of people will be given employment without drain on the taxpayer; and the position of the farmer should be materially improved. It is to be most sincerely hoped that the President is right. But if he is wrong—!

Quite recently, it was stated by the official head of the Unemployment Relief Committee in New York City that within a short time \$75,000,000 of additional subscriptions—or money from some source, public or private—would be required in order to supply relief for a period of a few months. Double that amount would be needed to carry on the work through the winter—unless, of course, business conditions so improve that the hundreds of thousands now out of work in

New York will be restored to employment. From many other places throughout the country have come similar reports. The funds of the great charitable foundations and organizations are pretty generally at a very low ebb. The difficulties of collecting the money absolutely essential even to the minimum functioning of these organizations are already formidable and steadily increase. Moreover, many experienced philanthropists, among them men and women notable for their common sense and well-balanced judgments, declare that not millions but billions of dollars will have to be expended during the coming winter to keep away hunger and cold from the multitudes of the destitute. Here again, of course, such opinions are qualified. Charity will not need to find and disburse these gigantic sums if business turns good—quickly, and universally. Which seems to many like trusting to a miracle. Yet upon this factor the President's policy rests.

An examination of the language of the first of his paragraphs, as quoted above, will show how firm must be Mr. Hoover's belief in the speedy return of normal business prosperity. Three hundred millions of dollars are to supply "a solid backlog of assurance that there need be no hunger and cold in the United States." But so strongly does the President believe that direct money aid should not be dispensed by the federal government, that this backlog is to be guarded against being used except under conditions so drastic that if literally observed it would seem most unlikely that a single dollar of it could be utilized. For loans from this fund are only to be "based upon absolute need and evidence of financial exhaustion." Mr. Hoover explicitly declares that he does not "expect any state to resort to it except as a last extremity."

In short, it would seem to be a backlog to be preserved in a locked woodshed, and not one to be consumed in the fireplace as the foundation and heart of a bounteous fire warming all the house—unless some frightful blizzard should come and absolutely no fuel can otherwise be obtained.

Charity workers as well as those members of the unemployed who are still able to think intelligently may well ask themselves—or preferably, they might ask the President—how "absolute need" is to be defined, and what will be accepted as "evidence of financial exhaustion." For unless men and women leaders of the charity unemployment funds and organizations are quite wrong, men and women and children are today absolutely in want of food, and shelter, and clothes, and medicine. To be sure, they are not cold, except when a rain-storm falls, nor will they be cold until the autumn and the winter come. As for the states, and their own relief funds, here again are questions of fact. Are these funds near exhaustion? If so, can they be replenished without recourse to federal aid? If they do ask for federal aid, as a "last extremity," what facts are to be accepted as proof of their desperation?

It seems to us that only the promptest and most far-reaching return of prosperity within the next few weeks

can prevent these questions becoming the only ones which most Americans will consider important.

There are many signs that such a movement may already be at hand, if not actually begun. Reports from various parts of the country at the beginning of the third week in July were decidedly encouraging. In Ohio one of the larger steel companies found it necessary to enlarge its operations considerably above previous estimates. The same conditions were prevailing in Alabama, where the mills of the Gulf States Steel Corporation resumed production. In Utah the copper industry revived in at least two of the larger camps, at the Bingham Mine and the Garfield Smelter, putting about 1,500 men back at work. The warning is given, however, that the duration of the new work would be subject to the continuance of prices justifying production, and such a maintenance of prices cannot yet be considered certain. In the Missouri section, at Springfield, there is a renewal of activities, the Oberman Manufacturing Company putting 500 men back to work after a six-weeks lay-off. In Connecticut, at Danbury and Norwalk, the hat makers are busier than they have been for a year, with the return to work of hundreds of men and women. There are signs that certain textile mills in New England may reopen the first of August. These are a few of the symptoms of revival noticed in the business columns of the press of late. Whether they are mere spurts brought about by the need to supply depleted stocks of goods, which will die down again, or whether they are the beginnings of that general upward movement which is so ardently longed for by all, is a question which, like the other questions raised above, will soon be answered not by guess-work, or by wishful thinking, but by the acid test of cold, economic facts as they develop themselves out of the midst of the present confusion of guesses and prophecies.

Even if the answer is what all hope for, namely, a real and persisting return of production and sales distribution, there are two factors which will probably remain to compel continuing attention to the problem of relief. The first factor is that even if industry resumes its pre-depression volume of production, it is altogether unlikely that it will be able to employ anything like the same number of workers as before. Not only the increase in the use of labor-saving mechanism, but also the intensifying of efficiency methods will operate to reduce the working force. In other words, the nation must realize that it must deal with the problem of a very large and permanent mass of displaced workers—a considerable part of which will not be crude labor, but men and women who formerly held executive positions. The second factor is that, in any case, even if the first difficulty should disappear because of some really tremendous revival of prosperity (which, however, is not at all likely to occur), there still would remain to be solved the most fundamental problem of all, namely, how to reform the industrial system so wisely and justly as to reduce to a minimum the chances of a recurrence of general depression.

WEEK BY WEEK

THE RESULTS of the Lausanne debt conferences are in several respects startling but not unexpected. When the United States officially declared that Europe must put its own house in order, the way was prepared for a shifting of political alignments. British policy had vigorously opposed the attitude of the French Right groups, which clung to the old view that reparations must be collected from Germany for the sake of both revenue and the balance of power. With the arrival of Herriot, the need for such opposition automatically disappeared. The question now became one of war debts pure and simple—a matter toward the consideration of which no great amount of acumen need be devoted. Ultimately the United States is the creditor nation. If Germany cannot pay the sums outstanding, it follows that if they are to be collected the original borrowing nations must dig into their pockets. This, however, they have never intended doing; and obviously the present is not a time in which any European government could suggest to its citizens so onerous a task as debt refunding. The only way out was to effect an agreement that if nothing could be collected in Germany, nothing could be collected in England or France. For all practical purposes, this action means the cancellation of war-time loans made to the Allied powers. Of course there will probably emerge from future discussions some compromise equivalent to the settlement which follows any bankruptcy and receivership. But the old principle that the debt of the United States would be paid off by receipts from the borrowing nations has joined sundry other items in the current financial junk heap.

TO WHAT extent the administration is a party to this settlement cannot be determined. That banking interests and commercial concerns of an international scope want the debt question eliminated goes without saying. Diplomatically also the "stand-pat" attitude grew more and more untenable. There was no earthly reason for insisting that European nations declare themselves bankrupt, and every motive for effecting enough stability to bolster up purchasing power. Thus the large popular groups of United States citizens who insisted upon payment as a matter of principle, or as the result of a grudge, or as taxpayers unwilling to assume the burden of repaying what had once gone to help other nations, have been left stranded. They will probably control Congress for years to come, but in matters of this kind both Senate and House are relatively powerless. We do not view the result with any great pleasure. The idea that the United States can abrogate the debts without loss since it will gain largely by a trade revival is not correct. Of course the said revival—if it occurs—will be a great boon. Nevertheless, the money lost is a pretty high premium to pay for our share. It ought to have been possible to do

much better, though the fault is attributable to no one in particular. The country has been of such a divided mind on this problem that arriving at any real solution was out of the question. That is an explanation, even if not a source of great solace.

NO DOUBT of it. The governmental temper has been considerably sharpened by those long additional weeks of wrangling which the nation has observed with comparative indifference. In the Good Old Summer Time Pseudo-volcanic outbursts of irritation flooded Capitol and White House with the lava of hostile epithets when Speaker Garner challenged the President's notion of relief, or when Senator Bingham tested the readiness of his Democratic confrères to come out for the Chicago platform before the elections. The prevailing mood, however, goes deeper than tiredness. That every Republican senator and representative up for election this year faces almost certain defeat is generally taken for granted. Indeed, there is a general feeling that the "wet plank" was adopted by the Democrats less because of its value during the presidential campaign than because of its usefulness in the skirmishes for seats in the national legislature. All of which fills many a valiant breast with exasperation. Why, one is asked, should the prevailing attitude toward Congress be so unfriendly? Leading senators in particular see the work they have been doing in an entirely different light from that in which the public sits. To them recent months have meant a continuous struggle to effect compromises between equally extreme points of view, all erratic and all deeply lodged in certain sections of opinion. Quite a number are ready to admit that the "system" is inadequate for the present emergency, but they fail to see how they could have managed differently under the system. The wonder of it all is that, to date, no one has arisen and declared that he has had enough of the life, and that all the king's horses could not drag him into seeking office again.

THREE items have appeared in newspapers of recent dates which bring home to the decent imagination with shocking concreteness one of the grimmest of our unsolved social problems. First: a tubercular war veteran of forty-five begged for, and won, a life sentence in Auburn prison for grand larceny, instead of a proffered one-year sentence for petty larceny, to avoid being sent back after the lighter term to the Michigan state prison at Jackson, from which he had escaped. Michigan's fourth-offense law would have made him liable to a life sentence there, and his escape would have earned for him, besides, a six-months' discipline in solitary confinement in contracted quarters, four months of it on starvation rations of bread and water; it was this that he felt unable to face. His three previous offenses were selling a mortgaged automobile, passing a forged check for \$14.00, and breaking into a

railroad siding. The second item relates the death, after prolonged torture, of a young prisoner in a Florida prison camp; his guards have been indicted for murder. The third item tells us that, after eight hours of questioning by the Mineola, New York, police, a man suspected of holding up and beating the mother of one of his interrogators is dead, admittedly from a very shocking sort of violence, and that the district attorney is investigating the case.

AS ONE tells over these details, not any of which, shamefully, makes unfamiliar reading to the American citizen, one is stricken by a more than individual sense of impotence. It is rather the corporate impotence of our whole society that appalls one. Our national group makes but a sorry, a very partial, success of the most fundamental enterprises, conducted in the open, in which we all clearly have an important stake: politics, for example, or education. How, the question asks itself, can we hope to control and sanitize these remoter, less reachable matters? Human nature being what it is in the best of circumstances, how can we expect it to be strong, equitable, wise, in circumstances of perplexity or of special invitation to tyranny? Yet this is a counsel of despair, to be resisted with all our will. It is an imperative duty that our penal and police problem be brought measurably nearer a decent solution than we have yet brought it. Savagely severe laws, no matter what their provocation, must be mitigated to represent some real balance between justice and humanity. Sadism and brutality must be denied that opportunity which authority over the weak, the recalcitrant, the helpless, give them; where suspected, they must be sedulously checked up; where proved, they must be unhesitatingly punished. Above all, the right men must be found to dispense penal and police discipline—men who are strong, sensible and enlightened. This must be done not merely because we are a civilized people, but because, when our abuses become inextirpable corruptions, our civilization will certainly pass.

THERE is particular significance in the recent announcement that William R. George, founder of the George Junior Republic at Freeville, New York, and one of the best known social workers in the United States, has changed his mind about prohibition. His practical work with the younger generation, particularly with delinquent boys—or to use more specific language, youths who for various reasons were out of adjustment with their environment and who were on the way to being developed into enemies of society—his justly famous success in the readjustment of such boys into good citizens, gives special weight to his declaration that he “favors repeal of prohibition because it doesn’t work.” He added, “Mr. Rockefeller is absolutely right. Nobody with any sense refuses to admit that national prohibition doesn’t work. I hate liquor. I always hated it. And when we tried national

prohibition, I thought it would wipe out liquor. But it simply won’t work. Anybody can see that the evils arising from the Eighteenth Amendment are vastly greater than its benefits. We’ve got to get rid of it.” THE COMMONWEAL welcomes this new adherent to its own convictions on this question. Of course, we have never hated liquor, but have rather loved the ideal of temperance and respected the practical asceticism of total abstinence in those who do not lose their sense of proportion about this single virtue. Dr. George is no doubt in entire agreement with this position and his expression of dislike should not be interpreted too literally. The fundamental principle and strength of his social welfare work has consistently lain in putting the emphasis on the positive things.

SOME people have suspected us of being agin the automobile. This is not so, as we have enjoyed many pleasant outings made possible only by the automobile and, along with nearly everyone else, we find no end to its practical uses. All of the abuses which may seem chargeable to the automobile, we believe are due rather to inadequacy of proper facilities for its use. In spite of the remarkable progress made in the building of roads, these are only rudimentary by comparison with what they might be. A particularization of the purpose for which roads are used should be made. For instance, a clear plan for three types of roads should be applied: the first, specially constructed for trucking; the second, for fast inter-urban passenger traffic, involving distances over twenty-five miles without turn-offs; and the third, our present type of general utility road. This suggestion, of course, is not new, but it is one that has been attempted hardly at all. We can see no reason to believe that the development of aviation would make such a plan obsolete before it could be completed, as aviation will develop its particular uses for the covering of long distances. It will never have the common utility of the automobile for running down town to the store, for instance, or for running around to see neighbors, or for local deliveries. And airplanes, or any kind of flying machines, unless they develop high speed—which in turn means going considerable distance, if there is to be any reasonable margin of utility—must remain pretty sensitive to adverse weather conditions. A head wind reduces appreciably the effective speed of a plane, so that if express highways were available for automobiles, a person on a trip of moderate mileage could make as good time on the road as he could in the air—and have the added advantage of having his car when he gets to his destination for the thousand and one utility trips that can be made only in an automobile.

THESE random reflections were prompted by reading an Associated Press dispatch recently of the reëmergence of the horse and buggy on country roads. This was accounted for by the low price of farm products,

feed and straw and such things. Farmers without anything to use for money, were keeping their cars in the barn, or not buying new ones, while old Dobbin was being given an extra measure of oats and pressed into service. This news may arouse atavisms in some readers who will long to feel the lurch of a buggy again, and the crunching of its metal tires on stones, while the faithful and patient horse humps himself along, sometimes shedding more than an occasional hair. Personally, we hope the renaissance of the horse has some permanence. There are many circumstances in which the horse is more economical and more suited to farm life, than is the machine, and as regards the amenities of country life, a straw-ride, or sleighing in winter, are as nothing with a motor compared to what they are with a horse or horses. There is no necessity for running around the country great distances at high speeds. In fact, more than half of this, as it has been practised in the recent past, was sterile of either pleasure or profit. A sense of attachment to place, of improving the corner where one is, instead of going great distances only to observe that others have failed to improve the corners where they are, may be a natural development in the years to come. However, this does not counter anything said in the first paragraph; this is a large and very diverse country, and some people incline to one thing and some to another. If our young country is to advance in maturity, there will be an easement in the emphasis on formulas for living which imply that everyone should live in the same way.

THE REACTION of the Soviets to visiting English radicals of importance is much safer to predict than the reaction of the radicals to the Soviets. The Soviets wish to conciliate and attach weighty outside opinion, so they act, very sensibly, like any concern on the make: they fête their visitor, feed him caviar (or, if he is a vegetarian, its equivalent, presumably, in delicacies compounded of cellulose and chlorophyll), take him on a luxurious tour of their show places, tell him the current jokes, and in general make him an honorary member of the lodge. Yet his approvals and disapprovals alike are apt to be unpredictable. When all this happened to Mr. Shaw last year, who could have guessed that, however impressed in general he might be, he would return publicly exchanging snickers of delight with Lady Nancy Astor, his co-visitor, over the Soviets' habit of speedily killing off disaffected natives? Similarly, who could have known that Beatrice Webb, the unbending collectivist who is now called Lady Passfield, would leave Russia deploring, of all things, Russian women's use of cosmetics—that "grossly immoral practice, characteristic of a decadent capitalistic civilization"? It is true that the reasons for one's surprise differ. It is something in Mr. Shaw—his famous humanitarianism—that makes one wonder at him; whereas it is merely something in Soviet Russia, as that comes

to us through photographs, that makes one wonder at Lady Passfield. We had not gathered, nor are we even yet convinced, that artificial beautification is a prominent fault of Communism's daughters.

BIG BUSINESS has until very recently been inordinately proud of its size and has frequently appeared in the attitude of looking upon the little business fellows as undernourished starvelings whose days were pitifully numbered. Now big business has had its fall that goeth after pride; and while there are certainly no indications that little businesses are up because big business is down, little businesses are showing a remarkably brave capacity for surviving. At the recent conference of the executives of smaller industries at Silver Bay, New York, a seemingly paradoxical explanation for this was given by one of the principal speakers who declared that the small plant has weathered economic storms disastrous to big business because financing sources available to the large industries were closed to little business. "The small concern, by its very nature," said the speaker, "has been unable to finance through bonds and stocks and thus avoided the difficulties of that system which is embarrassing great industry today." In other words, when business is bad, the small man does not have so many creditors looking hungrily toward him. Present conditions, we believe, may contribute to a rationalization of the functions of big and little businesses. There is no doubt that in certain lines it is foolish and wasteful not to have business organized on a large scale. The tendency has been, however, to bring everything under the control of a few giant corporations. There are many cases where the small local concern is able to render the better service at the smaller cost. And lest we think that the small businesses are small, it might be pointed out that they employ 60 percent of all labor.

FRANCES PERKINS, Industrial Commissioner of the State of New York, and likely to be high in the councils at Washington in the event of a Democratic victory at the polls this November, presided at one of the meetings of the conference and spoke very much to the point on industrial stabilization. This she visualized as no vague Socialist program, which should strike terror into the hearts of the classes because it would assume to provide a life of idleness and luxury for the masses. She asserted that on the contrary, industrial stabilization would seek to assure employees of an opportunity to work, where now they are forced to be unproductive and against their will to be a great drain and liability to those who may still have work or any capital. It will also mean for the employer and the investor, steady income. As a condition of the latter, however, Miss Perkins emphasized that such income should not be excessive. Fundamentally, the issue is whether the economic state is to be left to anarchy, or is to submit to a certain measure of government.

GOVERNMENT AND BREADLINES

THAT the final congressional task, which is the enactment of temporary relief measures, has been performed with despatch and intelligence it is impossible to say. The past week, as a matter of fact, has witnessed an amount of wrangling between the President and Congress which visibly shadows forth the struggles of the approaching campaign. Everybody realizes that the bill which has Mr. Hoover's endorsement is not adequate. Loans for the building of roads, for state relief work and for enterprises calculated to promote employment would have to be vastly larger if anything like an alleviation of existing misery were being planned. Yet it is only too evident that the government, already forced to draw an ominous groan from the taxpayer, simply cannot raise more money without going in for a program of currency inflation from which everything sound in Republicanism instinctively recoils. Nor did even Speaker Garner venture to make a last stand for such inflation. His dramatic demurrer to the bill, which elicited from the White House an indignant and dramatic veto in these hot July days, was based upon an attack against the policies of the Finance Reconstruction Corporation. Alledging that this acted only to keep corporations solvent, he appealed for aid in behalf of tens of thousands of citizens now groaning under the weight of intolerable mortgages.

The major criticism of relief heard nowadays is to the effect that consideration of it has been delayed too long. Even very conservative men and groups—Chambers of Commerce, for instance—are saying that the federal government should have faced the problem squarely at least a year ago. This trend is attributable to several things besides humanitarian impulse. Municipalities are, financially speaking, in a state of chaos; private generosity is necessarily wasteful and incomplete. So much attention is being paid to these problems, indeed, that current emphasis on planning may be said to have shifted from ideas designed to "organize" industry to ideas which, it is hoped, will stimulate buying power and the flow of credit. Thus one distinguished business man has outlined a system of bonuses, on the basis of which credit concessions are to be made by the government to such entrepreneurs as succeed in effecting the greatest relative employment of men. The thought that recruiting men for the national defense may be a way out is likewise making headway. Thus we understand that some Western states have organized bodies of troops in training, to which keep and moderate pay is given. But the number of such conceptions to have appeared in recent weeks is legion, and we have merely offered a sample or two of them.

Now it is obvious that what all the tendencies are envisaging is an emergency redistribution of wealth. Every time a man without money is given some, minus a demand for compensatory service, it is essentially a

redistribution of wealth. Whenever a tax is levied on the earnings of some for the maintenance of others, the result is a form of "equalization." The heart of the matter is, therefore, the actual nature of the national wealth. If this is construed as money, our conclusion must be that American wealth has dwindled catastrophically. How radical the decline has been is realized with a gasp of horror by all those who glance at pay-roll, stock market and tax figures. We have no way of telling how far this "deflation" may still go. If, for example, the war debts are cancelled (and in fact they will, for all practical purposes, be cancelled, regardless of what is said on paper or in orations), the national debt will expand; and if commodity prices fall another 1, 2 or 3 percent, consequent crashes will be felt all along the line.

On the other hand, however, the national wealth in actual goods is virtually what it was and capable of great expansion. Theoretically it is just as true as ever that every citizen wants a well-nigh unlimited number of things. How this works out in practice may be illustrated in the following way: literally millions of unemployed in cities need more food and clothing than they are getting, while the farmer has edible products, cotton and wool which he cannot sell profitably.

Is there, then, any way of effecting a ratio between needs that could be satisfied in commodities and dwindling money stocks? One answer is: yes, increase the amount of money in circulation. That, however, is not merely dangerous but also impracticable, because it remains just as necessary to increase circulation as to increase money.

Another solution to the question is indicated by the possibilities latent in social engineering. If, for instance, the existing network of county agricultural agencies were utilized to supervise a temporary transfer of jobless urban labor to the farms, certain good results might be anticipated. Virtually every farmer's plant stands in need of repair and improvement. If, in exchange for keep and a nominal stipend, a million unemployed men could be temporarily shifted (with a guarantee of fair working conditions) to the rural districts, with the understanding that the government would reimburse the farmer at about the rate of a private's pay in the army, the total cost for one year would be \$360,000,000,000. And there would follow a greater demand for farm products, a noticeably improved agricultural plant, a marked betterment of health and spirits, and a source of income for hundreds of thousands of farmers. This seems to us not only quite as feasible as road building, but immensely more promising.

At any rate, engineering was in a measure the watchword of the present administration, and we should like to see a little more of it. From some points of view, Mr. Garner is absolutely right. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation has been little more than a device for stalling off receiverships. Nor can it be much more.

THE SOBRIETY OF M. HERRIOT

By ERNEST DIMNET

SO THE Radicals are in power once more, and, owing to the large majority they have in the new Chamber, it seems as if they were sure to do what they pleased till 1936. For, remember, French governments are not accountable to the French President—who “is not a head but a hat”—

they are dismissed, or, on the contrary, kept alive by the Chambers, and the majority in the Chamber or Senate dictates to them what they have to do.

The Radicals have run the country almost uninteruptedly since 1877. Their only eclipses occurred during the 1919-1924 legislature, and again during the four years ending last April. They are used to power and they showed a curious mortification, a bewildered sense of unreality, both times the election happened to turn against them. During their first experience of the fickleness of the electorate, that is to say, during the five years immediately following the war, their astonishment at finding themselves in the opposition instead of in office was so laughable that it seemed almost pathetic.

It was not surprising therefore that, when in May, 1924, they were returned again by a substantial majority, they positively exploded. Their enthusiasm saw no impossibility. They wanted all the plums and they wanted them at once, as the phrase went at the time. The four or five weeks which, as usual, intervened between their election and the beginning of the session, seemed to them interminable. At last the suspense was over, the Chamber was summoned, and with an unforgettable whoop the sacking began. In no time all the rich posts, the fat sinecures, the points of vantage were divided. The Presidency itself, protected though it might be by the Constitution, was not immune. Mr. Millerand was unceremoniously pushed out.

Then the work of administrating and legislating for the country began. M. Herriot is a gentle anti-clerical, but there were in the Chamber over two hundred Freemasons whom he had to satisfy at once. In his very first message, he announced his intention to substitute the “laws of the republic” for the Concordat still in force in Alsace and Lorraine. Diplomatic relations with the Vatican were also to be severed; no ambassador to the Pope and no nuncio in Paris could be tolerated.

International policies were to be marked by humanitarian tendencies in vivid contrast with those of M. Poincaré. M. Herriot gladly submitted to the influence of his British colleague, Mr. MacDonald. In a few months the evacuation of the Ruhr district was de-

Socialists and those tinged with Socialism have excellent doctrinaire solutions for the ills of the world. They are the most insistent theorists of our times and there can be little doubt but that, by the cumulative force of their propaganda, they will have a large part in shaping the social history of the twentieth century. In its persistent quest for Eldorado, humanity seems always ready to try the new thing, some violently. Canon Dimnet, with a native clear-sightedness and vigor and with the maturity of view of a distinguished Catholic scholar, describes here the coming of age of a theorist.—The Editors.

cided upon, and the Dawes Plan, one of the five or six vouched to be final and sure to make everything smooth between France and Germany, was contemplated. All this was done briskly and enthusiastically. What the Radicals call their “mysticism” received full satisfaction. In less than a year

most of the objects they had proposed for themselves had been boldly set forth, if not positively secured.

On May 1 and May 8 of the present year, M. Herriot's party defeated M. Tardieu even more brilliantly than it had downed M. Poincaré eight years before. But this time we see no exultation; we hear no victorious acclaim. No Radical deputies fill the Palais-Bourbon lobby with triumphant gestures. No Radical newspaper indulges in prophetic descriptions of a glorious future. M. Herriot hardly appears in Paris. He discharges the duties of his mayoralty at Lyons or delivers in sunny Riviera towns the serene lecture on Beethoven which he was giving in Berlin a little while ago. A new President had to be elected, but M. Herriot did not do much for M. Painlevé, the candidate he evidently preferred. M. Lebrun, who is much nearer M. Tardieu than the Radicals, got in almost unopposed. Reporters every now and then visit the Radical leader and ask him what his intentions are. He replies that he would rather not commit himself. The convention of his own party will decide. All he has to say is that this is no time for excitement, and his only resolve is to show great *sagesse*, which French term applies with equal accuracy to a dispassioned old man's wisdom or to a good little boy's quiet demeanor.

What has happened? What has transformed the stern victor of eight years ago into this Buddhist sage? Well, M. Herriot is not a man of any great resolution but, like all men of vivid imagination who are not bad men, he indulges in dreams which he mistakes for resolves. I have not the faintest doubt that he is perfectly sincere in his new rôle. He is also a sensitive man, who does not easily forget bruises to his *amour-propre*. He cannot remember, without irritation, that he was egged into his anti-Catholic policy in Alsace eight years ago by an Alsatian Jew, M. Lazare Weiller, who had never been regarded as an anti-clerical, but who, that time, completely misjudged the situation. With positive shame he remembers that, before his calumet conferences at Chequers with the British Premier, it had been agreed between the French Foreign Office and Sir Eyre Crow that the Ruhr question should be left out of the discussions. In spite of such

a strong fence between temptation and weakness, when M. Herriot returned to France he discovered that he had given his word that the Ruhr district should be evacuated. No man can have had such experiences without realizing that he may be a good man, an able politician, a powerful orator, and every now and then—when concentration is possible—quite an excellent writer; but all these qualities are of no avail when you have to deal with strong-willed wide-awake realists from London or Berlin.

There are serious financial questions to be tackled the moment the new legislature begins: the French trade balance is unfavorable, the budget is 7,000,000,000 francs short, and, with Germany defaulting, a worse deficit is inevitable. On the other hand, taxation can hardly be increased (it is three times per capita what it is in America and is only more stringent in Great Britain). M. Herriot remembers that in 1925 he was advised by his friend, the Socialist leader, Blum, to "smoke out capital," but promptly found that capital can only be smoked out of a country to make it poorer and another country richer. In July, 1926, so much had been smoked out that a mere skeleton—\$30,000—was all that was left; the franc was hourly tumbling down and finally the same Poincaré who had been hooted out two years before, had to be humbly entreated by his very opponents to get them out of the mess. Such things are never forgotten, and in spite of his abundant health, buoyancy and optimism, M. Herriot knows there are things which other people do better than himself.

Next to financial questions which the Lausanne Conference will soon make critical, there is the Disarmament Conference and the necessity of adopting a policy with regard to Germany. Sentimentalists and sophisticates who do not care for the practical side of questions say that the recent election was perfectly clear: the people voted for peace, that is to say, for M. Briand, and in consequence all that M. Herriot has to do is to go on with M. Briand's policies. This sounds logical and especially easy, but to a Premier who has to think of himself in the terms of history, this course is beset with difficulties of which the electorate had, of course, no suspicion.

During seven years (1924-1931), rain or shine, M. Briand exercised a positive dictatorship over the foreign policies of France. It is well known that he did not take Premiers, even M. Poincaré, into his confidence. He consistently gave in to Germany and regarded the day the last French regiment marched out of the Rhineland, long before it was stipulated by the treaties, as the crowning date of his political career. In spite of that, in spite of his inborn and insuperable desire to please, he must have noticed that nothing he did was considered enough. It may have been the world's stupidity, but it is a fact that, through his whole septennate, France was still regarded and spoken of as a militarist, imperialist, heartless country. Nations were less severe on Prussia even at the time she was

destroying Poland than they were on France while Briand was in office. What is poor Herriot to conclude?

This is not all. No sooner was Briand dead than the private papers of Herr Stresemann were published, and what did they reveal? Stresemann was not the friend Briand imagined he was: he speaks of him all the time as his "opponent"; he was not a great "European," he was a diplomat of the old school and a pupil of Bismarck—the same man, after all, who almost till the end of the war thought Germany would not give back her independence to Belgium. Locarno was not the charter of peace which M. Briand had proclaimed it was, but a diplomatic maneuver to prevent a Franco-British agreement; a plan had been conceived to wrench concession after concession from the former Allies, and, if diplomatic measures failed, war—war which had been so solemnly outlawed—should be the *ultima ratio*, as of old. Stresemann made fun of the notion that the aggressor can be found out: "the guns go off somehow, somewhere, and one rushes in to help."

These revelations have been spared M. Briand, but they have not been spared M. Herriot. Nor has he been able to look away from Hitler's triumph at the Prussian election, and he is too intelligent not to have realized the full import of the coup made on May 12 by Generals von Schleicher and von Hammerstein on the Reich's government. The real motive behind Briand's action, and the only one that made it possible in France, was a desire to help the young German Republic. Now it is too evident that since May 12 Germany has a military not a democratic government, and that, in Germany as in Japan, the army is only accountable to the supreme authority, which pretty soon may be a Hohenzollern. Meanwhile, Poland is absurdly accused of having sinister designs on Danzig, and we remember having heard such rumors every time war has been brewing.

It is with this background that M. Herriot is taking office and has to make up his mind about a thing which is called "disarmament," but which may turn out in time to have been surrender. The consciousness of his own personal inefficiency, except as a home politician, added to his realization of the general situation, would be enough to damp a much bolder man.

Speed

Speed runs like water in the street.
It flows around my flowing wheels.
At every turn new currents meet.
The rising river swells
And people, standing at the side,
Wait for the waters to divide.

Speed is a current, moving through
The highways of the mind. It goes
Along bright channels, wide and new.
It whirls and overflows,
While slow thought, standing at the side,
Waits for the waters to divide.

FLORIDA WATTS SMYTH.

THE BRITISH ECONOMIC CONFERENCE

By LINDSAY CRAWFORD

THROUGH higher tariffs to freer world trade is the program before the British Imperial Economic Conference, when the representatives of British countries assemble at Ottawa in July. For more than eighty years England clung tenaciously to free trade ideals in a protectionist world in which tariffs had not yet become absolutely exclusive. Her most important customers were protectionist countries. The war changed the whole aspect abroad for England. Warning symptoms of industrial decline were apparent in the decade before the war. They became more pronounced after the war. In many countries a movement had begun looking to greater national self-sufficiency through increased industrialization. Tariffs became more exclusive, rendering more difficult the recovery by England of her overseas trade. A budget deficit, a growing unfavorable balance of international trade, widespread unemployment and a sudden drain on her gold reserves were cumulative adversities that did more to convert the country overnight to a policy of protective tariffs than thirty years of political propaganda by the tariff reformers. It was not that England had altogether ceased to believe in the principle of free trade, but that changing conditions had driven her people to ask, in the words of Lord Balfour, "whether a fiscal system suited to a free trade nation in a world of free traders, remains suited in every detail to a free trade nation in a world of protectionists."

This new protectionist and more highly industrialized world on which England looked out after the war, was a world in which other British countries raised tariff barriers against imports from the United Kingdom, and were her competitors in world markets. Not only had English statesmen to bewail the fact that they had deliberately deprived their country of the power of bargaining with foreign countries by means of tariffs, but that they had failed in earlier and more formative years to weld the empire into a compact economic unit. With the transition of colonies to the status of dominions, with control of their own fiscal policies, the opportunity was lost of acquiring for the empire the economic oneness possessed by the forty-eight states of the Union.

Sanguine expectations of the economic unity of the empire, by a policy of free trade within the British Commonwealth of Nations, were doomed to disappointment by the frank announcement by the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Bennett, that "free trade within the empire is neither possible nor desirable." Mr. Bennett also states that Canada will not surrender her present margin of security for her industries, and that nothing must be done at the conference which will block the road to world trade. The problem, therefore, before British statesmen is one not only

of increasing inter-imperial trade by a system of trade agreements between all British countries, but of utilizing these internal agreements as an instrument for making the empire as a unit an effective bargaining power in trade relations with the outside world. The difficulties are more real than apparent, in an empire in which parliamentary control of disparate fiscal policies is bound to give rise to party controversy.

The preferential tariffs granted by dominions on imports from the United Kingdom—and which Great Britain as a free trade country was not in a position until now to reciprocate, save on a limited classification of goods subject to customs duty—were not only a gift made by Liberal governments in the dominions, but in the case of Canada particularly were also a concession to domestic demands for freer trade. These preferences, in the hands of a Conservative and high protectionist government in Canada, have been made the instrument of England's conversion to protectionism, but there is no certainty that a change of government in England would not at some future time bring a reversal of this policy. Much will depend on the results of the experiment, which is undertaken ostensibly for the purpose of bargaining. Analysis of the situation tends to confirm the view that the political influences behind these empire trade proposals are concerned not only with trade results, but with the greater issue involved: whether it is possible longer to maintain unity within an empire in which economic differences cannot be composed.

Should the hopes of British statesmen be fulfilled, of uniting the whole empire behind a tariff barrier against the rest of the world, the consequent readjustments, however temporary in their nature, would oppose fresh obstacles to American trade recovery in foreign markets. Great Britain and Canada are our leading customers. Whatever disadvantages these contemplated changes within the British Empire may bring to other countries, the difficulties that confront the conference at Ottawa are not easily surmountable.

Two compelling motives led English statesmen to abandon free trade: conditions in the United Kingdom, and the desire to find some means of harmonizing dominion parliamentary independence with imperial unity. Failing the realization of free trade within the empire, great store is set on imperial sentiment as a means of increasing England's share of the trade of empire countries. That sentiment is not a reliable cement of empire is demonstrated by inter-imperial trade in the years during which the United Kingdom had the advantages of the preferential tariffs, granted by Canada and other dominions. Tariff-makers propose, but the laws that govern international exchange of commodities offer stubborn resistance to any artificial plans

devised to divert trade from its natural and most economic channels.

A subject of frequent discussion has been the failure of Great Britain to avail more fully of the preferential treatment accorded her exports in dominion markets. Trade statistics presented to the Imperial Conference in London show that while the trade between British countries other than the United Kingdom has increased in recent years, imports into these countries from Great Britain have declined. It is apparent also that the empire as a whole, in respect of trade, is still very far from being self-supporting. Of the total import trade in 1928 of British countries, supplied by other parts of the empire and by foreign countries, the total from empire countries was 38.6 percent, and from foreign countries 61.4 percent.

The open door to world trade British countries are anxious to maintain, and it will be a chief concern of the conference at Ottawa to avoid any decisions which might be likely to arouse hostility in foreign countries. According to British official returns the share of the British Empire in world trade has increased from 27.75 percent in 1913, to 29.48 percent in 1927. Classified under the heads of British and foreign, the share of the empire in world trade, in 1927, was: inter-imperial, 11.54 percent; foreign trade, 17.94 percent. Taking the empire as a whole, and inter-imperial trade omitted, the percentages of world trade in 1927 were: British Empire, 20.28; United States, 16.06; Northern and Western Europe (excluding Netherlands), 31.07.

The most significant feature of the statistics supplied to the Imperial Conference is the steady decline in exports from the United Kingdom. With 100 as the index for 1913, the total exports of the United Kingdom (including for purposes of comparison the Irish Free State) fell to 83 in 1927; as compared with 205 for Canada, and 157 for the United States. That the necessity imposed on Great Britain of finding an expanding market for her manufactures has not been relieved by the tariff preferences accorded her in British dominions and colonies, is one of many indications of the deep-seated problems that confront empire delegates at Ottawa. The difficulties in arriving at a satisfactory solution of inter-imperial trade matters would be of minor concern were Great Britain as a manufacturing country entering into agreements with dominions and colonies that were still in a nineteenth-century stage of industrial development. The perplexing problem presents itself of effecting trade agreements between countries which are competing with each other not only within the empire but in world markets.

One of the solutions proposed is the rationalization of empire industries; the exchange between empire countries of industries most adaptable to local resources and conditions. How far this plan can be carried out without injury to infant industries and the curbing of native enterprise time alone will reveal. It is certain, however, that domestic necessity—budget requirements, unemployment and other unforeseen circum-

stances—must in time prevail in the encouragement of local industries. Canada, for example, has iron ore and coal in abundance, but her steel industry is still in its infancy. Is it likely that Canada will always be willing to import finished steel products which at present are not manufactured in the dominion? Nothing, perhaps, illustrates better the increasing competition between Great Britain and her dominions, than Canada's trade with New Zealand. Canadian exports to that dominion are now chiefly composed of manufactured products. These have increased Canada's exports to New Zealand from \$1,300,000 in 1910, to \$23,900,000 in 1929. The problem for New Zealand is one of bargaining her farm products for English manufactures. To what extent can she succeed without injury to Canada? It will be interesting to see the results of rationalization plans, and the effect which differences in seasons throughout the empire may have in facilitating trade agreements.

England's large investments in foreign countries, her banking connections, mercantile shipping, centuries of unrivalled experience in world trade, and her many trade agreements with foreign countries, will make her reluctant to surrender to other British countries advantages which would tend to weaken her present connections abroad. Countries like Argentina look to the English market for the sale of products similar to those exported by Canada and other dominions, in exchange for English manufactures. In this give and take process of bargaining, the United States seems destined to bear the chief brunt of increased competition both in British and foreign countries. In estimating the effects of this keener competition, it should not be forgotten that the advantages which Great Britain so long possessed by being first in the field, are now possessed by the United States, by reason of its greater free trade area as a domestic market, and by reason also of its greater industrial efficiency. The factors that contributed to the enormous expansion of our trade between 1922 and 1929—the capacity for production at competitive prices plus service—still survive.

If, as English statesmen and economists contend, the protective policy entered upon is not so much a departure from free trade principles, as the creation of bargaining power to insure a return to freer trade in world markets, the United States will not be wholly at a disadvantage. For it may fairly be argued that to the extent to which the British Empire seeks to be self-sufficing, to that extent it will narrow its opportunities in world markets.

Magdalen

My Sorrow climbs
The white stairs of the stars
And falls at the feet of God.
O God,
Lift up my Sorrow
That she no wanton be!

EDMOND KOWALEWSKI.

PROGRESS AND CHANGE

By GREGORY MACDONALD

DANTE declared in an essay on politics, the "De Monarchia," that the end of action is contemplation, quiescence and peace. He said this not for himself alone but for his spiritual ancestors and his spiritual descendants, for his own age and for the whole of Christianity. Whether we realize it consciously or not, we Catholics of the twentieth century, who share willingly enough in a life of competition, incessant movement and ceaseless war, must subscribe to Dante's doctrine.

Contemplation is needed to use the full potentialities of the human intellect; prudence and wisdom are perfected in quietude; and universal peace is the best of those things ordained for our beatitude. In an age when every crude advertisement tempts us with bags of illusory money and bottles of unnecessary pills, it is good to continue the quotation of Dante's words:

Hence it is that there sounded from on high to the shepherds, not riches, not luxury, not honors, not length of life, not health, not strength, not comeliness; but peace. For the heavenly host said: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will."

In that tradition, and with those same words, Pius XI addressed all creation in his first use of the wireless.

It needs only a moment's quiet reflection (or even contemplation) to see that what Dante wrote is true. He did not say that the highest earthly good is inaction, the inert contemplation of some Eastern mystic. Action comes first. But action in time must be always striving toward its satisfaction where no time is, toward the finite creature face to face with its Infinite Creator, toward that peace which passes understanding. He meant that man in time must live *sub specie aeternitatis*. These are the roots, even in history, of tradition and permanence.

Nevertheless, one must face the fact that in this year of grace the statement of Dante's doctrine sounds preposterous. To think is bad enough, but to contemplate is to be a prig and a highbrow. Nor is quiescence to be reconciled with pep and hustle, with the go-getter who must ever go that he may get, with the good mixer who must always move and mix. The revealing phrases of that contagious jargon are phrases of rapid movement, of flux and change, while the physical circumstances of life are a discord or roaring engines, clanging bells and grinding wheels. As for peace, there is a popular abhorrence, at this moment, of war between nations, but industry is quite normally looked upon as a matter of campaigns, rivalry to the death between competing firms, signed treaties and shifting alliances.

Moreover, the very statement of the Catholic doctrine has been taken up to prove that mediaeval society, wherein that doctrine was powerful, was an unprogressive

society, static, incapable of development, until with the Reformation or the Renaissance new life came. That idea in people's minds is in part due to their ignorance of the middle ages. To a large degree, however, their ignorance is due to the idea. They have firmly made up their minds about two things, that we are progressive and that the mediaevals were unprogressive. They refuse to look into what did happen to civilization between the fall of Rome and the rise of Luther.

The first point about the middle ages is that they were full of the most intense activity. Here the Crusades might serve as an example, or the building of the Naviglio Grande by Milan at a present cost of over \$4,000,000, or the commercial bustle of the Hanseatic League in the Baltic, or the growth of the towns in the Low Countries, or the erection of countless churches.

The second point to be noticed is that the middle ages expressed development. A bird's-eye view ranging over Europe through those centuries would show development in its physical no less than in its mental structure. There was development in its towns and nations, in its machinery of government, in its universities and guilds, in its art, in its law, in its theology. Moreover, it was conscious development, not evolution, for men were guiding the growth of their institutions or their codes according to fixed principles held by them to be eternal. And again, it was development, not mere change. Change came with the disavowal of principles, so that in the Renaissance it was the new despot who silenced the old parliament, the new rebel who derided the old theology.

What Dante stated as an accepted principle in the "De Monarchia" was, then, illustrated by the middle ages and it is believed by us today. Yet we share in a new culture which definitely contradicts that principle. Dante said that man's actions in time must strive toward timelessness, where there is no change nor shadow of alteration. Even what man does in a small way must share that aspect of eternity; what he sets himself to develop must be developed toward a full idea.

But, much more than we may think, we help to preserve a culture which is controlled by the principle that the end of action is change. Change is succession or alteration within time, and it must stop short at timelessness. The men who hold that doctrine must be bankrupt of tradition, impatient of development, bereft of permanent things. According to James Anthony Froude:

So absolutely has change become the law of our present condition that it is identified with energy and moral health; to cease to change is to lose place in the great race; and to pass away from off the earth with the same conditions which we found when we entered it, is to have missed the best object for which we now seem to exist.

Lord Tennyson made an even more striking antithesis in "Locksley Hall":

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon
in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward,
let us range.

Let the great world spin for ever down the endless
grooves of change!

Since the middle of the last century this doctrine has been repeated in popular confusion with Darwinism, as an ascertained truth. And it is true, within careful reservations, that a developing thing is a changing thing. It is equally true that a developing thing is a progressing thing. Emphatically it is not therefore true that a changing thing is a progressing thing.

On every side one hears that mere change is true progress, a doctrine which has been encouraged during a century by a rush of brilliant inventions, the rapid exploitation of new territories, and the discovery of synthetic methods whereby wool can be made to look like leather, leather made to look like wool.

It is becoming clear by now that what has been hailed as progress is nothing of the sort, but rather a series of revolutionary changes in the life and surroundings of man which are on the way to make large masses of human beings morally and materially bankrupt. There can be no doubt but that the cinema, the radio, new

methods of transport, new types of cities have changed human life. Can anyone honestly say that human life has developed in 1931 out of what it was in 1831? It has not, nor could it be expected, for there is no aim of development at work in our new culture.

Furthermore, the idea of development cannot live side by side with contradiction or negation. Yet it is a proud boast of our times that we have discarded old beliefs and created new ones. Nowadays, all over the world, one is asked to look upon the enduring things of civilized life, such as the family, the state, the rights of the individual, property, the worship of God, in the light of arguments which are not a development of old arguments but a denial of them. Our culture is based upon change and time; it has lived precariously for about fifty years.

But a striking paradox appears when the advocates of change suddenly assert that change has come to stay, that our order of culture is permanent, with all its mass-produced cars of short life and all its high buildings so soon pulled down to make way for higher. And it is just there that we have warning given to us. A culture based upon change and its necessary destruction cannot last. The day will come when we who believe in tradition and eternity will be called in to make our old order out of their new chaos; and this we can do only if we are not infected by the decay around us. Dante spoke for us not of time but of eternity, not for his own century only but for ours as well.

THE GUARDIAN OF GARDENS

By ETHEL M. SMITH

THEY are the most alluring things in print—seed-catalogues—the most dexterous of the host of Artful Dodgers that haunts the gardener's world. That is why it is wise to invoke his aid before you even turn a page in the first of them that comes to hand.

Ask him to be good enough to dim the cerise glory of the Rose of Heaven, with its foil of silvery leaves, and to veil the violet-blue pyramids of Oxford Spires until such time as the more pressing needs of the kitchen gardens have been met. Who could be chided for letting their delicate floral charms overshadow the hausfrau homeliness of succulent bush-beans or the crimson-veined verdure of beet-tops? But Saint Fiacre, if he will, can help you to administer even the slenderest of seed-budgets with monastic frugality and with such skill that the nicest possible balance will be maintained between beauty and the beastliness of eating.

Or forgetful of the fact that you should "let curiosities alone," you may remove the protective mulches a bit too early. Do not get panicky but humbly ask him to intercede for you against late frosts.

When fresh cohorts of weeds sound a concerted battle-cry, and stiffened joints and aching back rebel against taking up the cudgel of the cultivator, do not

be discouraged. Remember good Saint Fiacre. In his time he must have waged the same warfare behind those espaliered walls of the monastery garden at Breuil.

After autumn has provided your perennial borders with a fluffy blanket of sere, brown leaves and before a frosty hand has been laid upon the earth, a snowy mantle flung down over it, ask again for his help. Beg him to steer hungry moles away from your blushing Picotees and harlequin Parrots. Entreat him to send greedy Johnny Cottontails in another direction.

And, last of all, pray that a fleecy cloud may chance to go scudding across the sky on those winter days when "the lidless eye of noon" is prone to cast too ardent looks upon your tender evergreens. Do not be timorous about hinting to him now and again that winter is a bit inclined to weight their shoulders with his snows. After all, they are but young!

He is sure to understand each and everyone of your needs perfectly, *Le Bon Saint Fiacre*. When he was on earth he was kind to all growing things and that is why he is the patron of all good gardeners.

He was by birth a Gael, the son of a chieftain of Kilkenny, but it was his choice to be fostered, in religion, by the Eldest Daughter of the Church. Today

in Ireland there remains but the most obscure of hamlets to mark his supposed birthplace on the River Nore. Kilfiachra—the church of Fiachra—is so insignificant that only the most conscientious cartographer would trouble to include it. But, across the Channel, in *La Belle Pays* it is quite another story.

Perhaps the martial atmosphere of Kilkenny in seventh-century Banba was not exactly conducive to a contemplative life. Saint Faro's foundation at Meaux must have had about it a reputation of heavenly quiet that acted as a magnet of silence upon this princely son of an Irish chieftain. For, upon landing in France, he went directly there and presented himself to the abbot. Columbanus had preceded him by some years and none knew better than Saint Faro the work that the Irish missionaries were doing on the Continent. He appreciated to the fullest the strength of the chains of faith that they were forging, embellishing and reinforcing them with manuscript jewels in a string that reached from Iceland to Italy. Fiachra was welcomed.

There were glebe lands not so far off, in the forest at Breuil, he was told. He might have "as much as could be circled in one day by a furrow" upon which to build an oratory to Our Lady, which sounds to us like a very generous offer. But to the son of a ruler whose mensural unit was a tuath, representing thirty townlands, it appeared microscopic. So he used the point of his crosier instead of the primitive and slow-moving farm implement of the day and thus encircled sufficient acreage within the specified time, following the rule of obedience to the letter, if not exactly in the spirit. And because of this, and a profound sense of humor, Saint Faro felt that the youth had not left himself open to reproof, and merely laughed.

At Breuil he gave his heart to God and his hands to the garden. His Celtic heritage must have carried with it that enviable possession, "the green finger." With this digital gift soil-testing sets, hot-bed thermometers, fungicides in variety, and other gadgets seem superfluities. Those who have it need no "markers" for their flower-friends, they look upon them as being better suited to a "meadow of the dead." The very seed-leaves are recognizable, "cuttings" are exchanged, lady-bugs are welcomed, newly-hung crescent moons are not scoffed at, and hard work is anticipated. But, oh, the "next-to-nothing" bit of paradise that results! Little wonder that Fiachra's garden became a byword. For France is a land that has never lost sight of the fact that agriculture is the backbone of a nation's well-being.

Miraculous cures took place at his hands and continued to be performed at his burial place, after his death. Breuil took upon itself the rarified air of a place of pilgrimage. Court-jewelers were commissioned to furnish lavish reliquaries, their surfaces encrusted with gems, to house bits of his relics. Anne of Austria, the statesman-cardinal, Richelieu, and other nobles became devoted to his cause. Mystery plays portrayed his good deeds and at length even the rubicund *cochers* of Paris and their rickety cabs became associated with

him, in a way. Alas, for kings and cabs in France, they are no more! But cabbages (without kings), *mais oui!* They shall go on forever, rolling about like huge beads of sea-foam jade, or huddled in piles like great globes of opaque amethysts cut *en cabochon*. And Fiacre, the Gallicized Gael, shall be best, and most lovingly, remembered as a simple tiller of the soil.

His feast is observed on August 30 in those country districts that sweep from the Belgian border to gay Provence, from the Bay of Biscay to those green fields where the shadows of Mont Blanc lie like those of rather rugged gnomons. Sandy sabots will go clattering, and thin-soled shoes will be heard a-tapping, across the flagged floors of mellow old churches. Thickly calloused knees and pink, well-rounded ones will kneel together upon chill, lithic surfaces that have been time- and prayer-smoothed by devout forebears. Becoiffed heads with dainty lace lappets and more modishly covered examples with neo-Parisian adornments will bow in unison. For this is the day when *Le Bon Saint Fiacre* will be asked to intercede with the Greatest of all Gardeners, the Planter of Eden, to make this, and other harvests-to-come, reflect his bounty.

But, you may ask, what about the cabs? What had he to do with them?

It was the concessionary mind of an *aubergiste* in the Rue St. Martin who brought about that connection. To attract the patronage of provincials he had taken Saint Fiacre as the patron of his hostel. The homely figure of the saint of the soil standing behind his plow added a rural touch, gave it a hint of *rus in urbe*. One might even dream that the scent of moist, freshly-turned earth was being wafted to him when the wind blew from off the Seine. And, moreover, the wasted space in the cobbled courtyard, vacant except when a diligence arrived, troubled his conscience. Why not start a hack-stand, leasing space to those who rented conveyances? And because it was the first centralized assemblage of conveyances that might be hired, it was customary to send a *commissionnaire* to "Le Fiacre" in search of a carriage. It was, of course, no time at all before the term came to stand for the object sought!

On the route to the battlefields lies Meaux. In the cathedral here the relics of Saint Fiacre were brought for safe-keeping when Calvinistic fanaticism made Breuil unsafe. Here the aquiline Bossuet soared and sung. Do not pass by this town on the Marne, even though your guide may compare the cathedral with Chartres, much to its disadvantage. There are other than architectural viewpoints. If you love gardens, if you have Irish ancestry, you may like it.

An old print of Saint Fiacre, if found, might be enshrined in your garden. Encouraged by his presence the crocus may come earlier, the chrysanthemum linger longer and the Christmas Rose be a reality. The tender hellebore seldom furnishes a northern bloom that can be laid in the crèche while the Christ Mass is being said. But, with protection from the Guardian of Gardens, it might be coaxed a little. Who knows?

COTTON-PICKERS

By HARRIET TERESA HASSELL

ANOTHER day begun raucously. Another dawn coming as a confusion of soft blue shadows with earthy Negro voices raised in song or dispute. Vaguely rounded hills, jewel-like in damp mist; sputter and roar of arriving trucks; brusquely shouted commands from the colored forewoman; long stretches of cotton, waist-high, lushly green, impossibly white—all these sounds and sights around me as I go into the kitchen and begin the daily toil of preparing food for thirty omnivorous cotton-pickers.

Dishes. Dishes. Stacks and stacks of them left over from last night when weariness was too heavy on the limbs to be borne. They come out of the suds like large thick buttons, drop gently into the scalding water, and smelling of soap and cleanliness, deliver themselves over to my feeble attempts with a drying cloth. Knives, forks, spoons, here and there around the white oilcloth oval until, finally, the table is set.

Mary, her round black eyes sparkling with zestful intelligence, clumps in. "Mawning, Miss!" Her voice is deep, oddly sonorous coming from that overalled bulk. Her earrings, which are golden circlets, dazzle as she turns her head. "Fixing somepin for my Niggers to eat?" Mary never says "darkies" or "colored folks"—she prides herself on forthrightness. "Yas ma'am!" she cries oratorically. "I b'lieves in speakin' out. Ain't nothin' to this bush-beatin' business!"

Mary is the big chief and rules with might and fervor. "But I'se good to 'um," she assures me. "I treats 'um right, givin' 'um they dues an' takin' mine. I totes watah, mends sacks, sees they gits the right count at weighin'-up, an' gen'ally looks after 'um. Somebody got to do them things. You see how it is—kain't stop in the middle of yo' row to git watah, an' all that. Somebody got to do hit, though; an' somebody got to boss things. Yas, ma'am! An' I stands for they meals, an' gits mine when the White Boss pay us at the gin, on Sat'day nights. Today is Saturday! Oh, halleluliah!"

My preparations go on. Tomato soup, gallons and gallons of it; green peas; fried corn, tender and juicy; layer upon layer of apple pies; coffee, measured by the handfuls into a five-gallon can. The peas part from their pods difficultly, as though they understand to what stomachic sacrifice they are going. Soon, however, my fingers grow more used to their task and the shelling goes on faster. But how tiresome to sit between four walls while the shady back porch invites! Out there, damp winds touch me tentatively; the peas flow from the pods in streams; and the last wisp of a spiritual floats lingeringly, begins again and rises presently in thunderous, uneven volume, mournful, nostalgic, the song of slaves praying for white skins and freedom.

By noon the tables are ready; plates helped, chairs ranged round, coffee steaming on the stove, while the hungry workers splash hot faces and hands with well-water. "Hurry up, dah! Git a move on you! Miss waitin' to serve lunch!" Mary stands in the doorway, calling commands. "Dah you! What you mean lollin' on the grass 'stead of linin' up wid the rest? Come on, git yo' money ready, an' hand it to Miss as you passes by. Hats outside!" she warns an unmannerly brown youth who shows signs of wishing to eat with his cap on. "Kain't behave yo'selves you kin stay out'n the house!"

Talking, laughing, chaffing one another, they take their places at the tables, and, with a pause for asking the blessing, fall to. They swallow lustily, most of them with a gusto natural to mouths whose juices have been too long unsatisfied. Only the Preacher and Anna eat slowly, taking the soup with accustomed

manners. Anna is nervous though; her shaking hand often tips the spoon too far, and before she finishes, her waist is plentifully besplotted. "'S all right, sistah," they assure her when she begs pardon. "Jes' take yo' time; Miss ain't mindin' if you hangs on longah dan the rest. She knows yo' nervous."

Mary leans over as I pass with a tray full of brimming coffee-cups. "Anna bin in the Asylum," she whispers. "She all right now; jes' ain't got control of herself yet, you know."

"Been in the Asylum! What next!" I think, suddenly smitten with that crawling fear of dark skins and dark minds which every Southerner must feel sometimes.

They are leaving the table now, passing outside to the bench by the well. Presently they are all gone except Anna and the Preacher; and he, too, is rising and bowing. "Mercy!" my frightened thoughts cry. "Must I be *alone* with her?" The Preacher wipes his mustache, bows again. "Thank you, Miss. Certainly did enjoy lunch," he says, so suavely I am startled. The door closes softly, inexorably, behind him; and Anna begins to talk, slewing her neck around, fixing me with her beautiful, mesmeric eyes. Her long, protrusive jaws move steadily as she enunciates with un-African distinctness, and the bracelets on her arms jingle with every feverish gesture. Only the necessity of dish-washing saves me from complete hypnosis. My wild glance searches the kitchen for a weapon with which to repel her should she attack me—and falls on the window above the work-shelf. Through the glass, I see the Preacher seated on the bench outside, a thin volume raised to his eyes. I can read the title plainly: "The Anatomy of Melancholy." A wrenching pity, alien to all my inherited prejudices, stirs in me; and, for a moment, I am traitorous to them. For an instant only, though. Anna is there behind me, symbol of the smothered terror my color feels before hers.

Afternoon passes slowly, jarringly. Once I leave the hot kitchen to wander out onto the porch. W.D is there, drawing water from the well and murmuring to himself. "Miss Mary sent me to fill the buckets," he explains in that saccharine drawl the inflections of which never waver. "Bein' as she so busy seein' to the weighin'-up. White Boss done tole me you-all from South Alabama," he continues. "Maybe you know the Enges then? Ol' Doctor Enge mighty good to me, raisin' me up right in his own house, an' sendin' me to school." He shakes his head sorrowfully. "Wuz mighty hard hit when he die; kain't spect the young folks to feel for you like the ol' ones does. Young Doctor, he sort of turn me loose to git on the bes' way I kin."

That confusing pity again! How terrible to have no chances, to be hemmed in hopelessly from every side! I knead dough and slice meat thoughtfully; serve supper sadly; watch them pile into the trucks and start off for town—all with a sense of having witnessed injustice and pain. As the trucks take the first curve in the road, they begin to sing:

"'Come on home,' Jesus cried,
'Come on home!
Spread your wings, start your ride,
Come on home!'"

The melody grows dimmer, begins to lose itself in the hills, becomes a thin, frail thread, and finally fades away in one last triumphant shout.

They are all gone now, Saturday is over—for me at least—and I can praise all the saints for the day of rest coming. But my praise is neither fervent nor joyous. I have seen the victims of something very like oppression, and I am full of pity for them.

COMMUNICATIONS

A MORATORIUM ON MORATORIA

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: Mr. Harold J. T. Horan's "Moratorium on Moratoria" is a first-class statement of fact, and I would like to say so through your columns.

My own feeling about the present administration is not that its members do not know the situation as Mr. Horan states it, not that they are not working themselves around to a strategic position from which they can act either way, or three ways, but that they do not dare to tell what they are doing, and thereby leave the voters in doubt—when doubt is the very thing which, hanging over the whole political and economic world like a dense cloud, prevents recovery. I don't think that this administration is blind. I think that it is not leading, not explaining to the mass of the voters things which there is no way for them to know by themselves. I think this administration is preparing for three different eventualities: that the people of America "demand" that reparations and war debts continue to be artificially dissociated; that the people "demand" that facts be faced and reparations and war debts be treated as integral parts of the same political and economic problem; that, in case of general European default, the same skilful book-keeping to which Mr. Horan refers in Europe, can show in Washington that, in spite of default, we have received our due.

I suggest that the attitude of the German press toward the Democratic nominee may be based on consciousness of a diplomacy conducted by this administration subject to eventual interpretation favorable to Europe's factual situation—a diplomacy of which the American voter is still in total ignorance.

I consider reparations and war debts to be one of the major issues to be debated in this presidential campaign, and I believe that the average voter wants to know why respectable and intelligent and patriotic American observers do believe the question is a part of the depression in measurable degree.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

WHAT IS CATHOLIC LEAKAGE?

Louisville, Ky.

TO the Editor: In the very interesting letter in your issue of May 4, "What Is Catholic Leakage?", by Victor von Szeliski, a couple of references are made to the percentage of Catholics in the army during the war.

Inasmuch as I was chairman of the Knights of Columbus's work and in charge of all Catholic war work until the spring of 1918, I was very familiar with these matters, but there was never any religious census made by the Army and Navy Departments, although now and then an unofficial statement appeared in the press. Secretary Baker in a public statement once said, in connection with the Knights of Columbus being in war work, that they were brought into the camps to look after the religious welfare of the Catholic soldiers which, in his opinion, were over 22 percent of the army, and it was conceded there was a higher percentage in the navy.

It would seem, therefore, that these war statistics quoted by Mr. Szeliski would be no more reliable than the figures we find in "The Catholic Directory" on the Catholic population. If an accurate record is kept of the births and deaths of all Catholics, there would be very little trouble in determining whether or not there is a leakage, and how much. The Census Bureau could then give us all the required statistics for accurate findings.

P. H. CALLAHAN.

THE BIRTH CONTROL RACKET

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: As a life member of the International Catholic Truth Society there came to my desk the other day one of their pamphlets, "A Doctor Speaks Out on Birth Control," by Edward C. Podvin, M.D., who is the president of the Catholic Doctors Guild of St. Luke in the Bronx. This is the best brief presentation of the subject that I have seen, mainly because it makes so clear the fact that conservative physicians throughout the country are not in favor of birth control and that the most important medical organizations not only do not approve but take up a definitely negative position on the subject. Thoughtful physicians take the position described by Professor Paul Popenoe who stigmatizes birth control as "pseudo-biological" and declares that the propaganda for birth control "has in fact become a quasi-religious cult." He adds, "Like other new cults it is marked by zeal, fanaticism, intolerance and enjoyment of mild martyrdom, together with a lack of a sense of humor." If Dr. Podvin had given us nothing else but that quotation his pamphlet would be well worth reading.

JAMES J. WALSH.

THE BELLARMINE SOCIETY

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: I would like to call attention, as a brief postscript to Mr. Cheatham's letter in the June 29 issue of THE COMMONWEAL, to the work now being carried on by the Catholic Evidence Guild in this country. We are an organization, composed entirely of lay men and women, that has for its purpose the "carrying the truths of religion to the man in the street." We have been in training since January and are speaking every week in jails and hospitals in and about Washington. We hold an open air pitch on the campus of the Catholic University every Sunday afternoon at four o'clock and hope, as soon as we acquire the necessary confidence and experience, to move our portable pulpit to some down-town street corner. In addition, we conduct a half-hour radio program of music and instruction over station WOL every Friday afternoon.

We of the guild, and I am sure your readers, would like to hear of the activities of similar lay groups throughout the country.

JOHN J. O'CONNOR.

Secretary, C. E. G. of Washington.

A LAYMAN'S PLAINT

Asheville, N. C.

TO the Editor: The "Layman's Complaint" published in your issue of June 22 does not, in my opinion, voice the majority views of those who occupy the pews.

A sermon preached at Mass is intended to reach everyone, the intellectual and the unlearned. It usually consists of the reading of the Epistle and Gospel and an explanation. The Doctors of the Church did not exhaust their intellectual powers on the Epistles and Gospels, and if the explanation is made in simple language who should object? Not eloquence nor intellect of the preacher is the important thing, but the word of God, spoken in words that can be understood not by a few, but by all.

One living in the great metropolis has ample opportunity to hear sermons that are prepared and which may appeal to the intellectual, but the sermons unprepared, spoken in a simple manner as to a child, touch the heart.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven."

JOHN T. JOHNSON.

THE THEATRE

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

Hugh Miller Evokes Dickens

THE EXTRAORDINARY scope of the theatre and of the illusion it creates could receive no better illustration than in the work of three artists, each of whom has proved capable of evoking from an empty stage the shades of a multitude. For many years, Miss Ruth Draper has defied every tradition of scenery and costume and living characters by stimulating the imagination of audiences to a point where they saw and felt and even heard the characters to whom Miss Draper was talking. Then came Miss Cornelia Otis Skinner, using at first the Draper technique, but gradually departing from it until, last year, in "The Wives of Henry VIII," she succeeded in creating a new form of episodic drama all her own. We now have, in the work of that distinguished English actor, Hugh Miller, still another example of the power of a single individual to fill out the requirements of fully rounded drama. In his "Characters from Dickens," Mr. Miller manages to combine the charm of a discriminating lecturer, the illustrative sharpness of an expert reader and the dramatic magic of a creator of character.

The technique of Mr. Miller's "theatre"—for it is most emphatically the essential glamor of the theatre which he brings to us—is to begin with a brief and witty lecture on Dickens, and then to illustrate the points of his lecture by enacting certain scenes centering around famous Dickensian characters. In most cases, Mr. Miller is able to arrange these scenes so that only one character speaks. On occasions, however, he himself plays two rôles, the better to catch the outlines and the contrasts which Dickens has drawn. For it is part of Mr. Miller's creed that Dickens was endowed with that essential simplicity which is incapable of blurring the outlines of character. At times, Mr. Miller implies, Dickens changed his medium to suit the character, using now pastel and now the etcher's needle, to be followed by a pencil portrait or perhaps a fully colored oil. But no matter what the medium, the resulting portrait was distinct, intensely alive and astonishingly of the theatre.

It may be recalled that Mr. Miller first came sharply to the attention of New York audiences through his impersonation of Alfred Jingle in a delightful, though not long-lived, staging of "Pickwick Papers." Jingle, of course, is a study in staccato, and probably, from a technical view, one of the most difficult characters to portray without deadening artificiality. Mr. Miller made of him at once the mountebank and the romantic gallant, giving him an amazing combination of angularity, abruptness and grace. It goes without saying that Mr. Miller includes Alfred Jingle among the characters of his Dickens evening. It could not be otherwise, and no one would want it to be. But the real burden of the evening—and a burden only to the strong shoulders of Mr. Miller himself—comes from the deeply and theatrically colorful pages of "Bleak House."

Obviously the most difficult problem in bringing the Dickens portraits to life is that of selection. Where should one begin and end when every page is a challenge to the theatrical instinct? Perhaps you would like to hear Mr. Guppy's declaration of love. Mr. Miller gives you that—Guppy hinting for a drink under guise of offering one to Miss Summerson, Guppy declaring, "My present salary, Miss Summerson, at Kenge and Carboy's, is two pound a week. When I first had the happiness of looking upon you, it was one-fifteen, and had stood at that figure for a lengthened period," or Guppy allowing that his

mother "is eminently calculated for a mother-in-law," granted that "she has her failings—as who has not?—but I never knew her to do it when company was present; at which time you may fully trust her with wines, spirits or malt liquors." A little bit tragic, this Guppy, in spite of all. Or would you rather see Mr. Krook about to skin a cat? Or perhaps Mr. Smallweed on his visit to Mr. George at the shooting gallery? Mr. Miller can and does transform himself from one character to another with that inner fire (which he calls a secondary intelligence or mentality) found only in true artists. Aside from a swish of the hair or the buttoning of a coat, Mr. Miller uses no make-up. He needs none. He has formed his Dickens characters from within.

Mr. Miller also gives you the scene in which Mr. Bayham Badger introduces his guests to the portraits of Mrs. Bayham Badger's former husbands—"the first-class man that Captain Swosser preëminently was, and, on the other side, Professor Dingo—I knew him well—attended him in his last illness—a speaking likeness." In this and many other scenes, Mr. Miller is quite as successful as Miss Draper in bringing before you not only the character impersonated but also a whole roomful of people.

Mr. Miller knows the secrets of the stage even as Dickens, perhaps unconsciously, knew the secrets of theatrical character. But I have been very remiss if I have given the impression that Mr. Miller's evening of Dickens is merely that of an actor stringing together exceedingly well etched character bits. He evokes the whole spirit and feeling of Dickens, gives the genius of that writer new life and literary importance, and renews one's zest for reading Dickens with a thoroughly kindled visual imagination. Mr. Miller's work is worth many a university course in its subtle compounding of the spirit of the written page and the living theatre.

Miss Skinner Carries Forward

IN MY review last winter of Miss Cornelia Otis Skinner's dramatic creation of "The Wives of Henry VIII," I remarked on the unique character of her achievement in bringing to life and visual clarity an important period of history, and expressed the hope that she would make this field intimately her own by continuing to create for modern feeling many of the famous women of history. It appears that she is carrying forward exactly this line of endeavor, and that her latest triumph (this time in London) consists of seven scenes in the life of the Empress Eugénie.

I am indebted to a review in the London Morning Post for an account of this admirable piece of work. The London paper states that this "masterpiece, written and acted solely by Miss Cornelia Otis Skinner, is an achievement with which nothing else can quite compare. Its seven scenes—including a prologue and an epilogue—make in themselves a play as complete as if there had been a cast of twenty." The review then adds that "save, perhaps, for some moments in 'Cavalcade,' no current play approaches it in the poignant magic of recollected beauty."

One begins to wonder whether, in this enlarging scope of the individual artist, in the wizardry of Miss Draper, the historical rekindling of Miss Skinner and in the literary realizations of Mr. Miller, we are witnessing, in manifold forms, a return to the ancient lore of the ballad singers who once entertained the feudal courts of Europe? That, too, was a form of theatre. Perhaps we are meant to understand that the theatre is never so clearly the place for released imagination as when we see it reduced to its last essential of one human being—who is also an artist.

BOOKS

After Crime What?

Twenty Thousand Years in Sing Sing, by Lewis E. Lawes.
New York: Ray Long and Richard Smith, Incorporated. \$3.00.

WARDEN LAWES of Sing Sing began his prison duties something over a quarter-century ago after a few youthful years as a newspaper reporter, as a soldier in the Philippines, and as a member of an insurance company. His first position was that of a guard in Clinton Prison at Dannemora, New York, an institution conducted with old time rigor. In full force was the rule of silence, ironically enough introduced into American prisons by the humane Quakers on the mistaken subjectivist theory that in solitude the criminal would reflect upon and realize the error of his conduct. The striped uniform was still in vogue; there was neither real work nor real recreation for the prisoners; harsh punishments were constantly administered, and the prison was governed by fear alone. Keeper Lawes was warned by the officials over him that he would have frequent occasion to use his club. He did use it—once—only to learn that he had knocked out the wrong man, whereupon he resolved to adopt other means thereafter. This readiness to learn from experience and to judge of methods in the light of their results seems to have characterized him from the first and was largely responsible for his rapid rise in his profession.

From Dannemora he went to Auburn, where conditions were much the same, and from there to the Reformatory at Elmira, which he found more brutal, even, than the prisons. Gradually convinced that the system then in force turned men out worse than when they entered, he eventually resigned his position in order to study more enlightened methods in the New York School of Social Work.

A strong man was needed to restore discipline in the New York City Reformatory, on Hart's Island. Appointed superintendent, Lawes not only reestablished order but after a year had so won the confidence of the inmates that he was able, with several unarmed guards, to lead them to new quarters in Orange County and to handle them there in an institution without walls.

At the end of 1919 he was called to be Warden of Sing Sing. There, too, due to the humane but too sentimental administration of Osborne it was necessary to restore discipline. That done, he was able to proceed successfully with Osborne's program.

All this is told by Mr. Lawes in a modest straightforward manner in the opening chapters of his book which is mainly concerned with his twelve years at Sing Sing. A more intimate view of prison life has rarely been given. Incidents, comic, pathetic, tragic, tread upon each other's heels. Criminals of all types are brought before us in vivid portrayal. Finally, we have the conclusions to which the Warden's long experience has led him.

These may be briefly summarized. The preventive effect of punishment depends upon the speed and certainty of conviction, not upon the severity of the sentence which is often self-defeating since it causes juries to refuse to convict. For this reason Mr. Lawes is heartily opposed to capital punishment. The other and equally important purpose of punishment—reformation—can only be accomplished by leading, not by driving. The aim must be to change the criminal's scale of values and to arouse in him a sense of social responsibility. This can be achieved by giving him, so far as is possible under prison conditions, a share in the interests of the community. The fundamental test is not whether prison life is hard or easy but whether the prisoners are made worse or better men by it. Warden Lawes speaks with authority.

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The Background of an Experiment

Russia, by Hans von Eckardt; translated by Catherine Alison Phillips. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$5.00.

THIS is an extremely interesting history of Russia, well done but too long and too superficial. For the man in the street, it gives an excellent account of the historical development of Russia, on the whole exact and clearly presented. But in his scrutiny of the varied causes which brought about the Russian Revolution Mr. von Eckardt repeats the gossip which went around St. Petersburg salons just before and during the World War, and in this does not differ from all the other writers who have tried to explain it.

Mr. von Eckardt also repeats gossip concerning the tzarina, her favorites and her influence over the vacillating mind of her consort, gossip about political intrigues, accusations of pro-Germanism directed against the few people who had the courage to point out that, whatever might be the outcome of the World War, Russia was bound to collapse as a consequence of it. These things one would have preferred not to find in what might otherwise be considered a serious, instructive book.

On the other hand, some of its chapters, such as those which describe the antagonism existing between official spheres, the intelligentsia, proletariat and bourgeoisie, are exceedingly good and exact. So is that concerning the nationalist reaction which started in 1905, and found such warm sympathy in court circles. Mr. von Eckardt knows his subject, and therefore can speak of it with an authority no one in the least aware of Russian conditions at that particular time, can deny him.

Yet the book is too doctrinal as well as too long, teaching much but telling little one did not know before. It lacks the inspiration which is essential to writing history. Not only must the historian know his facts, but he must also be aware of the circumstances which have brought them about. There is no psychology in Mr. von Eckardt's "Russia" and no impartiality in the way the story is told. Its tone is that of a professorial lecture; it is more a volume of reference than anything else. However, much work has been spent on it, and it will be valuable to students of Russian history.

CATHERINE RADZIWILL.

A Bright Lady

Adventures of a Novelist, by Gertrude Atherton. New York: Liveright, Incorporated. \$4.00.

THIS is a baffling book. It is irritating in its egoism and cock-sureness, repelling through its bad taste, barren because of its total lack of anything even remotely spiritual; it is filled with prejudices, which make one sceptical as to the judgments of its author whether those judgments are of men or events; it reveals a personality energetic, fearless, adventuresome, but cold and basically selfish. Nevertheless, in spite of all these unattractive features, it contains much of value and more of interest.

Mrs. Atherton does well to name her experiences adventures. To give her credit, she has evidently been gifted throughout life with the faculty of at once heightening situations and events and at the same time exhausting their least potentialities. She writes vividly and valuably of the San Francisco of her childhood (presumably in the sixties although she is obviously averse to exact dates!), of her Spanish connection through her chimerical marriage to George Atherton, whose mother was a Spaniard from Chile, of ranch life in California, of her faithless "conversion" to Catholicism. These brittle accounts hold one's attention even while they infuriate one by their heartlessness. Truly does Mrs.

Atherton say at the conclusion of the California adventures that she has always felt herself "a spectator of life, never a part of it."

By far the greater part of her autobiography is concerned with adventures in New York, in Paris, London, Germany, Italy and Greece. For forty years or more Mrs. Atherton has traveled and written. Her book is filled with impressions of the artistic and literary figures of those years—Whistler, the Sharps, Ambrose Bierce, George Moore, Meredith, H. G. Wells, Hilaire Belloc, Hardy. These impressions and incidents are handled always dramatically. It is unfortunate that one is inclined to mistrust them because of the lack of human sympathy and understanding which the book evinces. Was Bierce hateful simply because Mrs. Atherton hated him? Did Hardy's drawing-room companions pay high for his fame because of his dullness?

It is impossible not to be disappointed in this large, energetic and interesting autobiography. Mrs. Atherton says that she seems to have been born "without awe." Perhaps therein lies the reason for the disappointment!

MARY ELLEN CHASE.

Moral Poetry

The Poems of T. Sturge Moore; Collected Edition, First Volume. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$5.00.

THOMAS HARDY, Robert Bridges, W. B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore offer a body of major poetry at the beginning of our century which is hardly inferior to any like period of the nineteenth, and which forms an immediate tradition for the practising poet. Sturge Moore is the most neglected of these, but the first volume of his collected works, containing many of the best lyrics, three representative dramas, his unwhimsical poems for children, and a long elegiac lyric, is an excellent introduction.

Moore is a major poet because he defines and subjects the central moral temptation of our time: that spiritual pride which would overreach natural limits. The problem is proposed by the breakdown, during the nineteenth century, of a traditional society in which each man moved in his accustomed station, so that, being no longer at ease in the world, men alternate like Moore or D. H. Lawrence between the terrible desolation of complete isolation and the corresponding effort to violate human relationships by imposing one's identity on others. Thus the characters of Lawrence's novels and poems, at one time, are self-destructively isolated, and, again, seek to mingle wholly and become one with the beloved. That this temptation to violate privacy is a moral evil Lawrence knew, but he willingly gave way and put only a fitful restraint on the impulse. The stylistic consequence is the hysteria of his later work.

Where Lawrence gave way, Moore has continually mastered the problem. What we may call the angular hardness and flexible inflexibility of his style, with its syntactic consistency from opening to close, probably comes from the strain of ceaseless moral assertion. Thus, lacking the support of a traditional society, he cannot be familiar in the manner of Shakespeare and Dryden despite a constant use of homely images and subjects.

The problem of human relationship is directly stated and resolved in a remarkable poem, "On Four Poplars," and indirectly in the three dramas, each of which shows a strong character bringing ruin through impatience with the natural order.

The long poem, "Danaë," deals with the mood of isolation already spoken of, and is very fine in the idyllic fashion. The great lyrics of the book, however, define this mood adequately and express control over it.

J. V. CUNNINGHAM.

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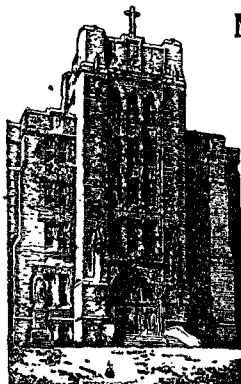
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Briefer Mention

I Sit and Look Out, by Walt Whitman; editorials from the *Brooklyn Daily Times*, selected and edited by Emory Holloway and Vernolian Schwarz. New York: Columbia University Press. \$3.50

THE "GOOD grey poet" served, as is well known, as editorial writer for several newspapers. A considerable amount of his comment has been lost; other portions have already been published. Messrs. Holloway and Schwarz were fortunate enough to discover in the files of the *Brooklyn Daily Times* during 1858 and 1859 sizable quantities of Whitman editorials which no one else had noticed. These are herewith made available in a book equipped with an introduction and a good thirty pages of notes. The editor herewith unearthed is no vehement critic, mighty seer or prognosticator of Menckenesse. He writes on all the familiar topics with classical force, clearness and precision; and his chief distinction is horse-sense, noticeable very particularly when he deals with the question of slavery. The book is readable less because of anything immediately engrossing in the editorials themselves, than because much in them reinforces the melancholy surmise that mankind learns very little from collective experience. The year 1858 had its fanatics, hard times, unemployment, crazes, disreputable politicians, birth control and bad authors. Walt was not always on the side of the angels, but it is a pleasure to note that he struck out squarely for a code of politics and morals now way behind the times. On the whole Messrs. Holloway and Schwarz have toiled estimably, though sometimes their remarks—especially when they suggest an indirect apology for Whitman's conservatism—are mildly amusing.

The Book of Saints: A Biographical Dictionary; compiled by the Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$3.00.

THIS is a new edition of what is virtually a standard "Who's Who" of canonized saints. As "Who's Who" is not the census, the present volume does not include all saints. Still its 300 pages with approximately twenty biographies to a page, does manage to be fairly inclusive. It is stated that it covers, "in addition to the saints of the Roman Martyrology, all others generally known, at least by name, especially those who have given place-names to towns or villages in the British Isles." There are four pages of the new appendix devoted to saints canonized since the original publishing of the book in 1921. This is a valuable reference work and all who might have occasion to use it are urged to see a copy.

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